

PESTICIDES

ChemLawn employees will be scrutinized

Health records of ChemLawn employees who handled pesticides from 1969 to 1980 are being studied to identify possible risks from 2,4-D exposure. ChemLawn sanctioned the study after the National Cancer Institute released a report last year suggesting a link between the herbicide and lymphatic cancer in farmers.

The NCI is conducting the study, which will include an estimated 5,000 ChemLawn employees and former employees who handled pesticides. It is the first such examination of lawn care employees' health records.

"We fully expect to find there is no problem with 2,4-D," says Chem-

Lawn's Steve Hardymon. "This was at our request after their (NCI's) original study came out. We've got much better information than they've got on the Kansas farmers."

The NCI study on Kansas farmers concluded that long-term exposure to herbicides, particularly 2,4-D, increased the risk of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. ChemLawn immediately suspended its use of 2,4-D.

(The NCI's conclusions were disputed by three of four epidemiologists hired by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.)

NCI researchers hope to find out if mortality rates of ChemLawn employ-

ees are higher than for people who do not handle pesticides. If they are, researchers will examine what products the employees worked with and what other activities they were involved in.

Sheila Hoar Zahm, Ph.D., of the NCI's occupational studies section, is in charge of the study. She says it will take about a year to examine the histories of present employees who were with ChemLawn from 1969 to 1980 and another year to examine the histories of those who have left the company.

A full report will probably be released in two years, Zahm said.

PRODUCTS

Fungicide label OK'd

The Environmental Protection Agency has given label approval to Banner fungicide, manufactured by Ciba-Geigy. The product is registered to control a number of diseases on cool-season grasses only. The two main diseases it controls are dollar spot and brown patch.

"We've been expecting EPA approval on Banner for a couple of years," notes Houston Couch, Ph.D., a plant pathologist at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Banner is a broad spectrum, systemic fungicide which is concentrated enough to have recommended application rates of 1-2 oz. per 1,000 sq. ft.

According to the company, 1 oz. per 1,000 sq. ft. will control dollar spot for two to four weeks; 2 oz. controls brown patch for two to three weeks.

Banner has entered market distribution and is available from Ciba-Geigy. "We're confident that the product will perform well," says Mike Joyce of Ciba-Geigy.



15th anniversary

Bob Russell, left, accepts a plaque honoring his 15 years as secretary-treasurer of the American Seed Trade Association's Lawn Seed Division from Lawn Institute executive director Eliot Roberts, Ph.D.

TURFGRASS

Midnight, Blacksburg tie in national bluegrass test

Midnight and Blacksburg tied for first with mean quality ratings of 6.1 on results just published from the National Kentucky Bluegrass Test. These ratings are the first obtained on the test, which was established in 1985.

In the USDA's rating system, 9.0 is ideal turf, 1.0 the worst.

Midnight scored best in Maryland and Ohio while Blacksburg's top scores were reported from Maryland, Oregon and Rhode Island. Midnight scored best (6.5) in September, Blacksburg in January (6.8). The two also tied for first in percent of living ground cover left in the fall with scores of 72.5. Midnight was rated sec-

ond in spring green-up and first in genetic color.

Next highest scorers were Rugby, Asset and BA 72-500, each with 6.0s.

According to the USDA report, "interpretation should be done with caution because results may be modified with additional experimentation."

Ratings were taken at 27 locations on 72 cultivars, some experimental. Here are mean ratings for the top cultivars:

Midnight	6.1
Blacksburg	6.1
BA 72-500	6.0
Rugby	6.0
Asset	6.0
BA 72-492	5.9

F-1872	5.9
Tendos	5.9
Classic	5.9
Trenton	5.9
K3-178	5.9
BA 70-139	5.8
America	5.8
Challenger	5.8
Georgetown	5.8
K1-152	5.8
BA 73-540	5.8
Sydsport	5.8
Victoria	5.8
Lofts 1757	5.8
Cheri	5.8
Haga	5.8
Baron	5.8
239	5.8